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SUBJECT: KOSOVO COMING ATTRACTIONS: ROUTINE UNMIK BRIEFING
BECOMES STAGE FOR RUSSIANS

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY. At the March 19 Security Council quarterly session on UNMIK, SRSG Rucker reported that steady progress continues on Standards and stressed that Kosovo needs clarity about its future. Speaking for Serbia, Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija President Raskovic-Ivic focused mainly on the final status process, warning that Security Council decisions would have major impacts outside the Balkans. She also charged that the Ahtisaari proposal is one-sided and insisted that autonomy within Serbia is the only realistic future for Kosovo. She said that inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo is a serious and continuing problem. Russian Permrep Churkin charged that Rucker's statement had been "unprecedented in its one-sidedness" and that most of what he had said was outside of his purview as SRSG. Churkin insisted that final status negotiations have just begun and should continue. UKUN deputy permrep and USUN permrep defended UNMIK's performance; Rucker rebutted Raskovic-Ivic's crime statistics. Following this public meeting, Security Council members held closed consultations where all made national statements. The statements of Congo, Ghana and South Africa expressed concern related to territorial integrity and the setting of precedents. In the afternoon, the UK hosted an Arria-style meeting of the Security Council for President Sejdiu. End summary.

Rucker Reports Steady Progress Interrupted By Outbreak of Violence

12. (SBU) At a March 19 Security Council meeting on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), SRSG Joachim Rucker reported steady progress in Kosovo on the implementation of the eight standards of good governance laid down by the international community for Kosovos's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. Meeting in a private meeting format (Council members, interested General Assembly members, no press, no television broadcast), Rucker also noted that there had recently been violence in Kosovo after a long-period of relative calm. He said such violence by extremists would not be tolerated and was not supported by the vast majority of Kosovo society. Rucker expressed concern that reactions in Northern Kosovo to the final status process could end up spreading to all of Kosovo. He criticized Belgrade for apparently pressuring Kosovo Serbs to not participate in Kosovo institutions and said this showed a lack of respect for UNSCR 1244. He said Kosovars, including Kosovo Serbs, need clarity about their future. Explaining that "managing expectations" in Kosovo is part of his role as

SRSB and in this regard reported Ahtisaari's settlement proposal had generally been well received by Kosovo Albanians with concerns focusing on its decentralization provisions, which Kosovo Albanians had accepted as part of a difficult compromise. Kosovo Serbs, he said, were mostly negative on the proposal.

Raskovic-Ivic: Warns of Impact Around the World

13. (SBU) Representing Serbia, Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija President Sanda Raskovic-Ivic told Security Council members that their future decision would have a big impact not just in Serbia, but around the world. The Security Council, "as the guarantor of the UN charter, must protect the principles of international law and should not take away 15 percent of Serbia's territory and change its internationally recognized borders without its consent," she asserted. No conclusion had been reached in the status talks, she charged, because Ahtisaari as mediator had overstepped his bounds and helped only one-side. She also alleged Belgrade had proposed 500 amendments to Ahtisaari's proposal, but none were accepted and suggested that no one had made a successful argument for creating a second Albanian state in Europe. Turning to conditions in Kosovo, Raskovic-Ivic said Albanian violence in Kosovo amounted to terrorism no different from terrorism anywhere else in the world. Noting that the Minister of Internal Affairs in Kosovo had resigned after the recent deaths of two Kosovo Albanians, she alleged that 931 Serb deaths over 7 1/2 years had produced no resignations. She also asserted that Kosovo Albanian authorities were systematically preventing the return of Serbs and that recent figures for returns were lower than 2005, but that even those were exaggerated. She also said 41,000 Serbs had lived in Pristina in 1999 whereas now there are fewer than 100. Returning to the final status process, Raskovic-Ivic concluded by calling Ahtisaari's proposal "one-sided and what is needed for the province is a

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model of substantial autonomy that leads to a realistic, sustainable solution setting no precedent."

Rucker Chastises Belgrade

14. (SBU) Rucker took the floor again and, without referring to Raskovic-Ivic by name, rebutted some of the "mis-statements on figures that were presented," referring Council members to the SYG report and annexes for more detail. He highlighted the overall 70 percent decrease in ethnic violence during the reporting period. He also said that recent figures showed 92-98 percent of Kosovars (i.e., more than just the Albanian population) believe that freedom of movement is at acceptable levels. He said that Belgrade should avoid ascribing ethnic motives to crimes before all of the facts are collected.

Russia's Churkin: Accuses Rucker of Delivering Sermon

15. (SBU) Saying "above all he wanted to thank Dr. Raskovic-Ivic for her presence" and then "noting the presence" of Rucker and "his delegation" (pointedly without an express acknowledgment of Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu), Russian Permrep Churkin charged that Rucker's statement had been "unprecedented in its one-sidedness and that most of what he had said was outside of his purview." Churkin continued that he would have thought he was being addressed by Ahtisaari after being treated to "a sermon on a subject that had not come before the Security Council yet." He averred that "talking about status before it is the appropriate time is one reason why we are in the situation that we are now." Churkin stated that Serbs in Kosovo still did not feel secure and it was hard to understand some of the assertions in Rucker's report. Churkin said negotiations had

only just begun on dialogue and there should be a continuation by the parties of the negotiating process because an imposed settlement cannot exist. He noted that Rucker had said a status decision needed to be acceptable to the people of Kosovo, but that also meant it needed to be acceptable to all the major ethnic groups, a principle that reaffirmed the need for a negotiated settlement acceptable to both sides.

U.S. and UK Defend Rucker

16. (SBU) Speaking for the UK, Deputy Permrep Karen Pierce took the floor and stated that the SRSG had the Council's full support and as a person appointed by the Council was the only person qualified to give an assessment to the Council. She said Kai Eide had also been given a mandate and decided, two years ago, that progress on standards had already been sufficient to begin status talks. Ambassador Wolff complemented Rucker on his presentation, underscoring that Rucker had addressed key issues pertinent to his mandate such as decentralization, Northern Kosovo, inter-ethnic crime and Belgrade's interference with Kosovo Serb participation in institutions. No other members intervened during the private meeting.

Consultations

17. (SBU) Adjourning to closed consultations (Council members and UN officials only), all delegations participated actively. Congo's permrep said African countries had many minorities and were "not comfortable" with the Kosovo problem. Some were trying to create upheaval in the province and there was an urgent need for a lasting solution, but that should not mean favoring one party. Congo welcomed a solution acceptable to both sides and would not hide that it was "more comfortable in the role of an official presiding over a marriage than a judge conducting a divorce." Congo said unity in the Security Council would be important and we should keep in mind the principle of territorial integrity of states. Ghana's permrep said his country regretted that considerable mistrust still existed between the two sides and hoped the two groups could narrow their differences. South Africa's permrep said all possibilities for a mutually acceptable solution in accordance with international law had to be explored. The South African spoke of the dilemma Africans faced by countries with imposed borders they had never accepted and many minorities. He remarked that people talked about the possibility of Kosovar violence and riots but those were nothing new to Africans as they were a reality

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seen every day, adding that "our people don't need a resolution to tell them to fight." South Africa was concerned about altering the borders of a sovereign state. Ahtisaari had met their President and they expected clearer instructions, but that did not take away from the serious issues.

18. (SBU) China stated that the question of Kosovo had entered a crucial phase but there should not be any less attention to standards. China was concerned about recent violence in Kosovo and said the Security Council at the proper time would review the status of Kosovo and consider the views of both sides and neighbors in the region. China believed a settlement plan approved by both sides would be "the most prudent way out." On handling Kosovo, he acknowledged, "the EU has unique influence and advantage."

19. (SBU) France stated that it believed Ahtisaari's plan was the only realistic one that would be workable. Italy's permrep said his country felt a particular responsibility toward this European problem because of its geographic and historical proximity. He said Italy believes it is time for a new Kosovo status arrangement and strongly supports

Ahtisaari but added that "more standards implementation is needed." Belgium explicitly said it would support Ahtisaari's recommendations. UK's Pierce said that the problem heretofore had been Serbia's lack of flexibility and it was constraining its own future.

¶10. (SBU) Slovakia said UNMIK needs to remain strong and that it opposed violence regardless of country of origin and the state of the status process. Slovakia was also concerned about the Venvendosije movement but shared Rucker's positive assessment of implementation of standards and the thirteen priorities and called for continuation of that trend.

¶11. (SBU) Qatar stated that state institutions in Kosovo were stable and effective, but said more progress was possible. Kosovo needed the support and backing of the international community.

¶12. (SBU) Peru noted the report mentioned some progress on standards but more is needed. Violence should not be tolerated and despite some positive developments, rebuilding churches and religious sites had not been completed yet. Peru regretted that Serbs were not participating in institutions. Peru said it could talk status at a later time, but supports a resolution based on international law and previous Security Council resolutions. Peru believed the EU could play a particular role. Panama stated that a solution on final status was important as there could not be any economic or social progress without it.

¶13. (SBU) U.S. Ambassador Wolff noted that we were encouraged by significant implementation on priority standards, although we looked for continued progress. He said we condemned recent acts of violence. Ambassador Wolff agreed with the SYG's assessment that after eight years the people of Kosovo needed clarity about their future. He endorsed the Ahtisaari package and said the status package of Ahtisaari was fair and balanced.

¶14. (SBU) Indonesia claimed the report mentioned violence but no attempts to prevent it and that lack of clarity on status should not be an excuse for violence. A stable Kosovo requires more than expectations and part of UNMIK's job should be managing those expectations. Indonesia also charged that a careful reading of the report suggested "final status was ready and UNMIK would be ending this year but we could not put the cart before the horse." Indonesia believed that the Council should decide the speed and timing of UNMIK's closure.

¶15. (SBU) Russian Deputy Permrep, obviously given little latitude while his boss was outside talking to the press, was gratified that many delegations had mentioned a link between standards and status. He said Russia believes the potential of negotiations was far from fully exhausted.

Arria Meeting

¶16. (SBU) The UK hosted an informal "Arria-style" meeting for Kosovo President Sejdiu, who attended the Council's private meeting as a member of UNMIK's delegation. Reading from a speech in Albanian, Sejdiu said that for the Kosovars independence was the alpha and the omega but that that they were also prepared to do their utmost to build a multi-ethnic

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and democratic society in Kosovo with a future in Europe. Sejdiu stressed that many of the compromises the Kosovars had agreed to in the Vienna talks had been very difficult but that the Kosovars accepted and supported Ahtisaari's package.

¶17. (SBU) Sejdiu's answer to every question was independence. France stated that much had been done on standards but more was needed. Sejdiu replied that clarity on status would facilitate implementation of standards. Italy

asked Sejdiu what he was doing to prevent violence. Sejdiu replied that resolution of the status question would defuse tension and was urgently needed. Germany asked about Kosovo's economic prospects. Sejdiu responded that without clarity on status, Kosovo could not attract foreign investors. Russia's working-level representative thanked President Sejdiu and said Russia sees standards and status as linked and believes that more needs to be done. The Russian representative said negotiations should continue.

¶18. (SBU) Qatar stated that it had common ground with the Kosovars as it was repairing its own constitution and lived in a region filled with conflict and knew that solutions had to also come from within. Sejdiu's presence before the Council proved that the Kosovars took this seriously at the highest level. Qatar wished them the best of luck.
WOLFF